



# Newsletter

## 2015/2016



### Greetings from the Past President

Professors, Students, Instructors and Alumni,

A great woman once said, "I am ALWAYS right!", that woman was Margaret Thatcher and she went on to rule England for 11 years. Just like when England was moving into the 1990s, The Black Hole Theatre is moving into a new era and fortunately unlike my dear friend, Maggie Thatch, I know when to step down.

However, 2014/15 Black Hole Theatre Executive was a success. Comprised of Dan Grant, Kat Petrash, Laurie MacDonell, Mark Finnbogason, Ryan Bjornson, Brendan Noyes, Abbas Butt, Evan Martin, Tara Noel, Bill Kerr and myself. We, as an executive, started "The Black Hole Theatre Does Charity" and put together a hamper for the University of Manitoba Food Bank. We had record attendance at all of our Black Hole parties including The Icebreaker, Rockin' Around The B-Hole, and The Second Annual Smithie Awards. We also put together a very successful season of plays that thrilled audiences. I am very proud to say that I am leaving The Black Hole Theatre in a much better state then it was a year ago.

The 2014/15 Season was one of the best seasons I have ever seen at The Black Hole Theatre all of the shows brought a unique artistic flair to the company and new challenges that the creative teams had to overcome. First, the BHTC season opened with Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* directed by Dr. Bill Kerr & Dr. Chris Johnson, both directors took this play in a dark comic direction and it paid off. The second show of the season was our entry into the Master Playwright's Festival, Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* directed by Dr. Margaret Groome.



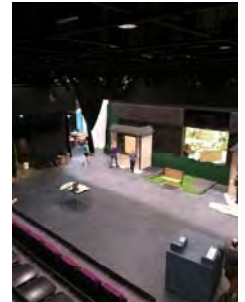
She brought Coward's wittiness to life on stage much to the enjoyment of audiences young and old. Finally, our third MainStage was Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* directed by yours truly, Daniel Tompkins. It was memorable experience, which I'll never forget. Especially the women

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### Shifting Spaces

by Kevin Ramberran

I'm no astronomer but from what I understand, there is a lot of space out there. Outer space also apparently has these things called black holes that suck up space and do other things that someone like me does not understand. What I do understand is the Black Hole that has sucked away much of my time (and the time of many others) that resides in the basement of University College at the University of Manitoba. Times are changing for the Black Hole Theatre Company as we focus our lights on a new space. Housed in the completely renovated Tache Hall, this new theatre comes with state-of-the-art facilities and has had the entire BHTC (and the Department of English, Film, and Theatre) buzzing for a long while.



There's a new energy in the BHTC as the company shifts from the old thrust stage with 400 square feet of space to the new 1400 square feet of space offered by the new space. The control booth is doubled in size to house the stage managers and show operators. The electrical room is no longer a shared space with the maintenance crew at the University and has an added 30 square feet. There's a decent increase in the amount of audience members the company can entertain on a night (though this number depends on how each show chooses to configure the retractable seating). Props personnel can look forward to having their own space that is not shared with the house manager's office. The box office will be transformed from a portable counter to an actual space of at least 60 square feet. Our new scenic shop hides just behind the stage (which will make set construction much easier) and is taking us from 1100 obstructed square feet to an unobstructed 1500 square feet. The costume shop is transforming from 140 dedicated square feet to 500 square feet and our new greenroom (which is not the same space anymore) is a whopping 400 square feet (with in house laundry capabilities and a stove). The dressing rooms in our current facilities are 220 square feet with no washrooms. Our new dressing rooms have washrooms

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## 14/15 Season

The Black Hole Theatre's 2014-2015 season was packed with family tragedy and was kick started by the fiercely hilarious *This is a Play* by Daniel Macivor directed by Jayse Meyer. This was followed by the awkward and funny interactions in *A Question of Sex* by Amold Bennet directed by Nickolas Petuhoff. The first mainstage this season was *Titus Andronicus* by William Shakespeare. Co-

directed by Bill Kerr and Chris Johnson this dark piece was covered with blood and the audience



Tamora (Julia Florek), Demetrius (Nicolas Groulx), Chiron (Cassidy Long), Alarbus (Jared Button), and Aaron (Nick Petuhoff) are held captive by Caius (Mitchell Condon) and Messenger (Kendra Hiebert) in *Titus Andronicus*.

was able to watch it accumulate on the stage throughout the show, transforming the look of the stage as bodies piled.

Next we were invited into a couple's woes in *The Collection* by Harold Pinter, which was directed by Steve Csinsca. Our second mainstage, *Hay Fever* by Noel Coward, was directed by Margret Groome and took place at the Gas Station Theatre. It was a great start to Coward Fest. Karen Schellenberg's elegant costume designs and Jeremy Ramptons astonishing set design really captured the sensation of the 1920s.



Sorel (Kerensa Peters) and Simon (Jeff Homer) listen to their mother Judith (Lulu Akhanamoya) in *Hay Fever*.



Emotions run high as George (Darcy Fehr), Martha (Angela Robbie), and Nick (Brandon Vink) struggle to Honey's (Laurie MacDonell) excitement in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

The emotional *Reunion* by David Mamet directed by Jayse Meyer was our final Lunch Bhagg and *Daniel Tompkins* directed *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee for our final mainstage of the season. 60's love songs created the warm and welcoming atmosphere and the realistic looking living room was quickly transformed by Martha's shrill screams, sending the audience into a downward spiral into this couples nightmarish games. We ended this season with another Fire in the Hole! This festival tied together our playwriting, dramaturging and advanced directing classes and created a unique experience night after night in The Black Hole Theatre.

Thank you all for a unforgettable season!  
Rebecca Gossel

## 2015/2016 Executive

**President—Ryan Bjornson**  
**Past President—Daniel Tompkins**  
**Vice President— Brooke Pluta**  
**Treasurer— Mark Finnbogason**  
**Secretary— Kat Petrash**  
**Member at Large— Brenden Noyes**  
**Onstage Rep— Abbas Butt**  
**Backstage Rep— Lauren Gowler**  
**Publicist— Jonah Wilde**  
**Intro Reps:**  
**A01 (Smith): Rowan Gannon**  
**A02 (Ross): Ayobami Ige**  
**A03 (Groome): Gabriel Gbeneye**

Continued from page 1— President's Message

who left the theatre in tears, who looked at me and said, "You broke me. I hate you".

I have to thank The Black Hole Theatre because without it, I would not have been able to direct my favourite play in the world. Without it, I would never have gained the experience that I now have. The Black Hole Theatre has made a lot of memories for many people and this December we say good-bye to the old theatre. On its stage many professionals had their start, on its stage many of us have made life long friends and at the end of this year this stage will only exist in our hearts. As we move into our new space remember that when you wish upon a star your dreams come true. If you have a play that you want to direct but everyone says you can't do it, with a little work you can stage it with the Black Hole Theatre Company. If you have written a play and you want it staged, it can happen with the Black Hole Theatre Company. Lastly, if you wish to belong it will happen at The Black Hole Theatre Company.

Finally, I would just like to say good luck to the new executive. This will be a challenging year moving into the new space but I know all of you can handle it. Many great memories were made in The Black Hole Theatre and I can't wait to hear about the new ones that are going to be made in The Conklin.

Thank You.  
Daniel Tompkins.

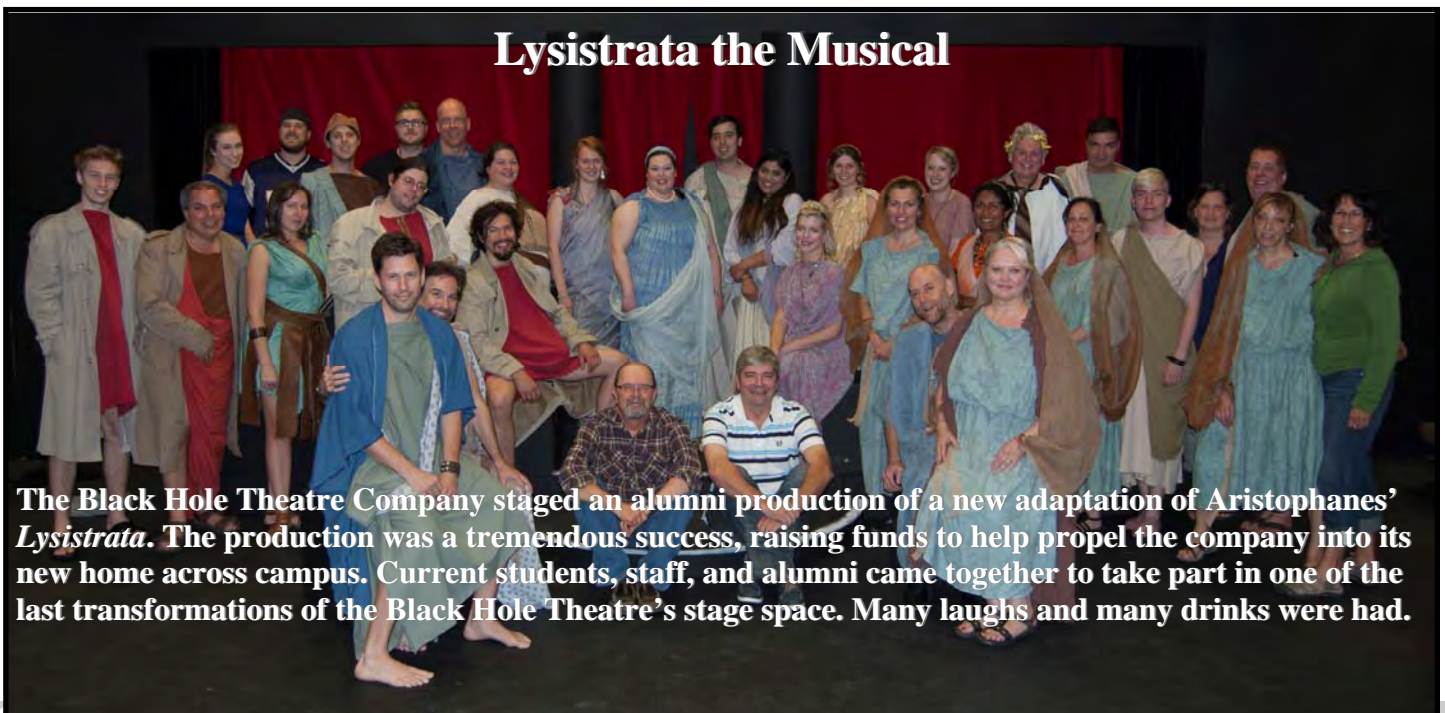
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and take up 600 square feet.

For our audience members, the BHTC is extremely excited to announce that our lobby will no longer be a dark little hallway but a large space with a licensed bar and video feed from the theatre. The next phase of the renovations in the building are currently underway but when complete, the lobby will be accessible through a large atrium that will also offer access to many more bathroom facilities and our new box office.

Truthfully, it is a bit hard to convey just how amazing this transformation is going to be for the BHTC on paper. The figures are impressive, but stepping foot in the space is really quite a remarkable experience. I urge you to make it out to our next two mainstage shows to experience this for yourself. George Toles takes the helm of Will Eno's *Middletown* for our soft opening on January 26<sup>th</sup> and the world premiere of Ian Ross' new play *Doubtful House*, directed by Chris Johnson, acts as our grand opening on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

I've spent many an hour creating brilliant memories with fine folks in the Black Hole Theatre. Each time I step into the new space, I still can't quite believe that this is going to be the company's new home. Many of us are nostalgic about losing some of the qualities of our intimate little theatre, tucked away like a secret. My nostalgia gives way to utter excitement every time I step foot into the new space and I'm sure the same feelings will be elicited in you as you join us for the remaining two shows of our mainstage season.



## Staff Doings

### MARGARET GROOME

Margaret enjoyed 8 weeks in London, England this past summer doing research, going to the theatre, and listening to jazz with friends. Among the productions she enjoyed were *The Importance of Being Ernest*, with David Suchet playing Lady Bracknell; the Restoration comedy *The Beaux' Stratagem* by George Farquhar; *The Audience* with Kristin Scott Thomas playing Queen Elizabeth; Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (so-so) and a fine *Richard II* at the Globe Theatre; and a challenging, innovative staging of Caryl Churchill's *A Number*. Margaret was also privileged to attend a lecture on "The Art of Beckett" given by Walter Asmus, the eminent German director and friend of Beckett. When not in archives, libraries, and at the theatre Margaret can be found in various London pubs, such as "The Engineer" in Primrose Hill, one of Jude Law's favourites. Margaret is currently enjoying enormously teaching her course "British Drama: 1930 to the Present."

### BILL KERR

I spent the past year (like many others) running in the sprint marathon that is trying to open a new theatre. For some reason, I also thought I twas a good idea to direct and act in last year's Fringe. Both *Disco Pigs* and *A Behanding in Spokane* were terrific experiences and a great opportunity to work with talented alumni but it was not the way my family planned to spend my 50th birthday. Oh well, the show(s) must go on.

### MELANIE MATTE

Melanie went to Tanzania in the spring. She continues to work on her degree in family social sciences.

### KEVIN RAMBERRAN

I didn't do much. Finished my Masters. Wrote my first full length play. Acted in my first television show. Wrote a self indulgent blurb in a newsletter. Pretty average year.

### GARRETT RUSNAK

I'm happy to once again be back at the U of M and the Black Hole

Theatre Company after a yearlong break. Over the summer, I spent my time working all over the city at places like the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, but spent the majority of my time working at Rainbow Stage. I was very excited to join the crew as Production Assistant for the season, and fulfilled a life long dream of working on *Les Miserables* as the Apprentice Lighting Designer. Other than working the summer away, you can also find me running up and down football fields all over Winnipeg as an amateur football official. I am very excited to be spending my days getting the new theatre up and running.

### KAREN SCHELLENBERG

After Fringe finished, we drove on a great adventure to the Yukon. The family had a wonderful time despite it raining every day of the 3 week journey and the trailer breaking down in Alberta. The kids were excited to sleep in hotels and we still made it to Alaska driving south to get there from Whitehorse (Skagway; it's a gorgeous drive on a rainy day). This really confused Jamie who likes to sing "North to Alaska and down the dusty trail"

### ROBERT SMITH

I was on sabbatical for the first six months and saw a wonderful *Mutter Courage* in Wien. I had an equally splendid time in the Austrian Theatre Museum (also in Wien). And I completed drafts of two plays. And helped to ghost write the alumni *Lysistrata*. And since then I have been teaching and teaching and teaching and teaching (four courses, you get the idea). I am looking forward to directing a show in the new theatre next season.

### SHANE STEWART

All in all it was an amazing year for me. After working for PTE for about 15 years I moved in here (sometimes literally) to the Black Hole Theatre. It became season of firsts for me; first set to be soaked in blood with *Titus*, fist load out/load in with the gigantic *Hay Fever* and my first set design with the rewarding *Virginia Woolf*. Not to mention the *Lunch bags* and *Fire in the Hole* it was a challenging but energizing first season. The summer was spent recovering , with a bit of work , and a few small getaways with my sweetie (Katie). I'm looking forward to another great year and thanks to everyone at the Black Hole for a very memorable year.

## Chris Johnson Retires

This year the BHTC says goodbye to one of its founding fathers. Dr. Chris Johnson helped build the Black Hole Theatre Company we all know and love from the ground up. Chris' contributions to the lives of every theatre student and the BHTC experience as a whole cannot be contained in all the pages of this newsletter. Chris recently took on our alumni production of *Lysistrata* to help raise funds for the new theatre. Chris leaves the BHTC by planting a new flag in the new theatre space as he directs our final mainstage, *Doubtful House* by Ian Ross, which will act as the grand opening. Chris has acted in a slew of capacities over the years to ensure the BHTC runs smoothly. One of his many important jobs was maintaining relationships and keeping up with our extensive amount of alumni. Without him, the BHTC community would not be the same. We'll miss you Chris. All the best!



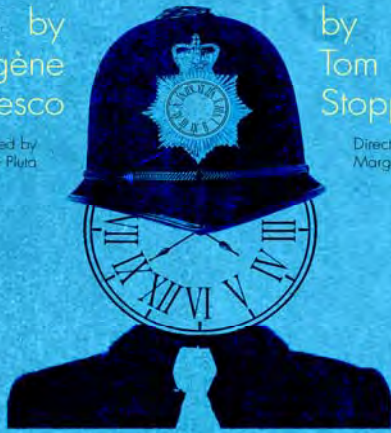
Chris with his wife Barb and Colleague Robert Finnegan

The Black Hole Theatre Company Presents

# The Bald Soprano After Magritte

by  
Eugène  
Ionesco

Directed by  
Brooke Pluta



by  
Tom  
Stoppard

Directed by  
Margaret Fergusson

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The Black Hole Theatre Company Presents

# Middletown

by Will Eno



Directed by George Toles

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The Black Hole Theatre Company Presents

**A WORLD PREMIERE**

# Doubtful House

by Ian Ross

Directed by Chris Johnson



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**MARCH 15 - 26, 2016**

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## Scholarships and Bursaries

There are several scholarships available that must be applied for. These include the Hirsch Memorial Scholarship (for creative writing), the Cohen Prize, the Promethean Endurance Award, and the Charles Birkett Rittenhouse Memorial Scholarship.

A new bursary has also been created: the Sharon Greening Memorial Bursary. It is \$1000 and available for a full time advanced Film or Theatre major in third or fourth year. Apply for it through Aurora.

### Promethean Endurance Award

Was not awarded this year because no one applied :(

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## STUDENT, ALUMNI, AND FACULTY NEWS

MEGAN ANDRES is at UBC, working on a joint MFA in Theatre and Creative Writing. In the spring, she directed the Tara Players production of Enda Walsh's *The New Electric Ballroom*, a production that went on to represent Tara at the Irish Theatre Festival in Cincinnati a few weeks later, where it won the prize for best production. MEGAN was one of the writers contributing to the new adaptation of *Lysistrata*, which the Black Hole alumni produced as a fund-raiser for the new theatre this fall.\*

JOSEPH ARAGON's new play, *How the Heavens Go*, was presented in a reading at the CAROL SHIELDS Festival of New Work at Prairie Theatre Exchange in May. The cast included ROSS MCMILLAN. JOSEPH did the music for the MTYP production of *Danny, King of the Basement*, this fall, and he's a member of the Playwrights' Unit at Prairie Theatre Exchange.

GERRY ATWELL serves on the board of the Plug-In Gallery.

GERRY is a professional musician, who performs with a number of local groups, among them "Eagle and Hawk". He wrote the music for *Lysistrata*.



Eagle and Hawk

SHANNON AULD was in charge of the props for *Lysistrata*.

IAN BASTIN performed in an episode of *The Pinkertons*, and played Rosencrantz in the Snakeskin Jacket/Bravura Theatre co-production of *Hamlet*. This fall, he was the production assistant for the Theatre by the River production of Christopher

## In Memoriam

### Jon Maksymowicz

July 28, 2014

Jon graduated in 1986. Quiet and very intense, Jon's forte was directing. He has the distinction of being the first person to direct a Lunch Bhagg, a production of Georg Buchner's *Woyzeck*; it was so successful that Lunch Bhaggs became a permanent "thing". Jon also made up the name, Lunch B.H.A.G.G. (Black Hole Anarchist Group, with an extra "G" to confuse things, anarchically).

### Hersh Binder

967 – Feb. 8, 2015.

A larger than life presence, always laughing, a gentle soul, and loved by all. One of Hersh's most memorable artistic achievements from back in the day was a very fine production of Joe Orton's *The Ruffian on the Stair* which he directed for the Fringe with Ross McMillan, Michael O'Sullivan, and Jane Burpee in the cast. During his career, Hersh worked for a number of organizations, among them Film Training Manitoba, Congregation Etz Chayim, and the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver.

Marlowe's *Edward II*, and an assistant director working on the Shakespeare in the Ruins stripped-down *Romeo and Juliet*. IAN was in the old men's chorus in *Lysistrata*.\*

MIKE BELL's new made-for-TV movie, *On Dasher, On Dancer, On Frankie ...*, was shot by the Lifestyle network over the summer, and was broadcast December 6. MIKE was another one of the writers contributing to *Lysistrata the Musical*.

AINZA BELLEFEUELLE worked on the lighting crew for the PTE production of *Butcher* and is a regular technician for Cerce Moliere. She also worked Kids Fest this summer.\*

CAITLIN BELTON is currently completing her Education degree, focusing on Drama. She returns to the stage in our production of *Middletown*.\*

STEPHANIE BEYKO teaches at John Taylor Collegiate.

RYAN BJORNSON stage managed *Lysistrata*. RYAN was one of the U of M reps to Theatre Projects Manitoba again this year.

CHRISTY BOETTCHER teaches at St. Anne Collegiate. She was an assistant director working on *Lysistrata*.

ERIC BOSSE designed the lighting for the Theatre Incarnate/Theatre Aztec/theatre out of line production of *Sapientia*. He continues to be the house tech for MTYP.

JEREMY BOWKETT was in the old men's chorus in

*Lysistrata*.

HEATHER BRAUN teaches at Stonewall Collegiate.

JASON BROADFOOT has a new job as Regional Manager British Columbia for Humana Assurance. JASON is an enthusiastic creator of fringe shows and performer therein; he frequently performs in the Winnipeg Fringe.

JULIA BROWN ran the lights for *Lysistrata*.

JESSICA BURLESON has a new job as the Executive Director for the Professional Association of Residents and Interns of Manitoba.

DON CALLIS is Executive Director of Manitoba Trade and Investment

SEAN CARNEY teaches in the English Department at McGill University.

DANIEL CHEN performed in the animated television series *Supa Strikas*. He will be in our upcoming production of *Middletown*.

TERRI CHERNIAK performed in the Warehouse production of *Late Company* in March.

LARRY CLARK teaches technical theatre at the University of Alberta.

LEITH CLARK teaches at Sisler High School. He directed their production of ANGUS KOHM's *I Was a Teenaged Zombie* last winter. LEITH was one of the directors working on *Lysistrata*, and also performed as "Man With Erection".\*

ARI COHEN plays a continuing role in the new TV series, *Gangland Undercover*. He also played a big role in a *Murdoch Mysteries* episode last season. ARI's last stage appearance was in *The Waiting Room* at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto last winter.



SARAH CONSTIBLE played Madame Arcati in the Echo Theatre production of *Blithe Spirit* for CowardFest 2015. Later in the season, she directed the Snakeskin Jacket/Bravura Theatre co-production of *Hamlet* in Snakeskin Jacket's new studio theatre on Albert St. SARAH was one of the performers reading Short Shots at the CAROL SHIELDS Festival at PTE in May, and this fall, she directed the Theatre by the River production of *Edward II*. SARAH wrote some of the song lyrics for *Lysistrata*, including the immortal "What the Fuck". This season, SARAH performs in the RMTc production of *Things We Do for Love* in AyckbournFest 2016, and in the TPM production of STEVE RATZLAFF's *Reservations*.

JONAH CORNE teaches Film Studies at the University of Manitoba.

ANDREW COYNE resigned as the *National Post*'s editor for editorials and comment after Postmedia management pulled a column in which he stated an opinion that ran contrary to the newspaper's endorsement of the Conservative Party. ANDREW continues as a columnist for the paper, and he's a regular panelist on the *At Issue* CBC TV program.

DAVE DEGROW is working on a doctorate in Theatre at the University of Toronto.

GEOFF DEVENNEY is a Technical Director working for Cirque de Soleil in Florida.

BARB DONOVAN helped with the costumes for *Lysistrata*.

PAUL DUNCAN was in the old men's chorus in *Lysistrata*.\*

PHILLIP DUNCAN teaches drama at Morden Collegiate.,

AUDREY DWYER was in RMTc's *Vanya, Sonya, Masha, and Spike*.

CHICAGO DYCK has completed his B.Ed. in the Faculty of Education at the U of M.

ERIN ESSERY played Kalonike in the Alumni production of *Lysistrata*.

RENATA ETCHTENKAMP was House Manager at Rainbow Stage over the summer.

CAROLINE EVANS teaches drama, choral, and vocal jazz at Springfield Collegiate. CAROLINE was in the old women's chorus in *Lysistrata*.

DARCY FEHR won Winnipeg ACTRA's VICTOR S. COWIE Award for best actor this year. You can see him in GUY MADDIN's new movie, *The Forbidden Room*. DARCY has been coming back to the U of M to take courses to finish his B.A.; last year, he played George in the Black Hole production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*.

JULIA FLOREK has a new job as a Student Advisor in the School of Social Work at the U of M. She played Lampito in *Lysistrata*, and performed as Tamora in the BHT production of *Titus Andronicus* last season.

DAVID FOX performed in the production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at the Park Theatre at Hallowe'en.

CARLY GALLANT helped with the costumes for *Lysistrata*. She can be found controlling the drunks at the King's Head every Fringe (and other times).

ANGELA GANNON (now ROBBIE) came back to us last season to play Martha in our production of Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. ANGELA teaches at St. John's High School. ANGELA's daughter, ROWAN, performed in our production of Coward's *Hay Fever* in CowardFest, and is a current student in the Theatre Program.

BARBARA GEHRING (MELNYCK) performed in *Motherhood Out Loud* at the Avenue Theatre in Denver last spring. BARB's show, *Girls Only*, was produced at CLO Cabaret in Pittsburgh last spring.

TRACY GEMMEL teaches English at Dawson College in

Montreal.

TASIA GERAS lives and teaches in Winnipeg, after spending several years on the west coast. She performed in the old women's chorus in *Lysistrata*.

EMILY GINGERA teaches in Langley, B.C. She became the proud Mom of a baby daughter in the spring.

TIM GRAY performs with the H.U.N.K.S. sketch comedy company, which will be going to B.C. in January to participate in the Vancouver Sketch Comedy Festival. Tim played Kinesias in *Lysistrata*.\*



MARGARET GROOME directed the BHT production of *Hay Fever* for CowardFest 2015. MARGARET also directed a Benefit Staged Reading of Coward's *The Vortex* for the Actors' Fund of Canada, performed at the RMTTC. MARGARET performed the major role of Florence Lancaster in this reading. MARGARET participated in the lecture series that accompanies the Master Playwright Festival, giving the opening lecture, "Introducing Coward" and appearing as a panel member on "Discovering Coward: Directors' Panel" at the Tom Hendry Theatre. In April 2015 Margaret's lengthy chapter on English-language directors of Beckett's works was published (in Spanish) in the book *Beckett Bajo La Lupa: Catorce Miradas*, edited by Maria Fernanda Arentsen and Fernando De Toro. (The English title of the chapter is "Samuel Beckett, Peter Hall and Alan Schneider on Directing Beckett's Work: The Challenge of Linking Form and Feeling.") MARGARET is directing a Benefit Staged Reading of Alan Ayckbourn's *Private Fears in Public Spaces* for the Actors' Fund of Canada as part of Ayckbourn Fest. This will be presented in the lobby of the RMTTC's Mainstage Theatre on February 8th. MARGARET will also be giving the lecture which opens the Festival, "Introducing Ayckbourn", on February 3rd at the King's Head Pub. In April MARGARET will present a paper at the "Victorian Intimacies" conference being held in Winnipeg, entitled "Eliza Vestris, Sara Thorne, and Millicent Bandmann-Palmer: Finding Intimacies in Directing Shakespeare."



Beckett Bajo la Lupa

DANNY GUNN is a lawyer practicing in Winnipeg. His firm was one of the sponsors of the alumni production of *Lysistrata*.

CHRISTINE HARAPIAK is a family court judge.

ROSE-ANNE HARDER is the Director of the Manitoba Arts Network.

TAMARA HARLAND worked on the production crew for *The Pinkertons* and *Sunnyside* last season.

HOLLY HARRIS writes the "Music Matters" column and reviews music for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

ELLIE HARVIE is an actor based in Vancouver.

JOHN HARVIE is a lawyer practicing in Winnipeg.

ANGELA HECK has a new job as manager of digital media programs at the National Screen Institute.

IVAN HENWOOD has a new job as the School and Touring Co-ordinator at the Prairie Theatre Exchange. IVAN co-produced the *Snakeskin Jacket*, Bravura Theatre co-production of *Hamlet* last spring. He also played the role of Claudius. The production was the first in *Snakeskin Jacket's* new studio theatre on Albert St.\*

ROB HERRIOT directed a production of *The Magic Flute* for Edmonton Opera last season. In the spring, he performed in the Dry Cold production of *The Addams Family*, and is assistant directing the RMTTC production of *Things We Do for Love* for AyckbournFest 2016. Later this season he'll be directing *The Magic Flute* for the Calgary Opera.

CYNTHIA HIEBERT-SIMKIN recently started her own law firm.

PATRICK HOFFMAN has graduated from Red River College with a diploma in business administration.

SEAN HOGAN's band, Seanster and the Monsters, is playing at Folk Fest this summer.



Seanster and the Monsters

JOAN HOLSTROM is a lawyer practicing in Winnipeg.

ADAM HURTIG performed in the production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at the Park Theatre last Halloween.

GARY JARVIS has taken over from ANGUS KOHM as producer of the MAP high school playwriting competition. GARY's play, *U20*, was performed as a "live radio play" at the Gas Station Theatre in May. GARY played the leader of the old men's chorus in *Lysistrata*, and in addition, wrote one of the scenes.

SANDY JOBIN-BEVANS is one of the hosts of the Canadian version of *Deal With It* on TV. You can also see him in reruns of *Life With Boys*.

CHRIS JOHNSON's essay, "El Legado de Beckett en la Obra de Tres Dramaturgos Canadienses: Michael Cook, George F. Walker y Morris Panych", was published in a collection of essays about Beckett, *Beckett Bajo la Lupa*, last spring. Last season, he co-directed *Titus Andronicus* with BILL KERR for the Black Hole, and in the coming season he'll be directing *Doubtful House*, a new play by IAN ROSS, for the Grand Opening of the new Theatre in the Tache Arts Project in March, 2016. CHRIS was one of the directors working on *Lysistrata*. He continues to serve on the board of Theatre Projects Manitoba, and he's currently working on an introduction to *We the Family*, a new George Walker play which Talonbooks is publishing this spring. CHRIS retired from teaching at the U of



M at the end of December.

WILLIAM JORDAN acted in *The Pinkertons* and *Historicity*, the documentary series he wrote and hosts, is now on MTS on Demand. He voiced a Warhammer video game as well as a few cartoons and is still pirating.



ANDREA KARR has been promoted to the position of Life and Relationships editor at *Canadian Living* magazine.

MAGDALENA KAZUBOWSKI-HOUSTON's new book, *Staging Strife: Lessons from Performing Ethnography with Polish Roma Women*, has been published by McGill-Queen's University Press. MAGDALENA is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at York University.



Staging Strife

LEIGH-ANNE KEHLER will be performing at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa later this year. LEIGH-ANNE is a well-known, professional story-teller. \*

MARGO KEHLER's improv team at Vincent Massey Collegiate won the Canadian championship at the Canadian

Improv Games last spring.

KAILEY KNAPP has earned her Bachelor of Social Work degree.

FRANCES KONCAN was the apprentice director working on the RMTC Warehouse/Mirvish production of Theresa Rebeck's *Seminar*.

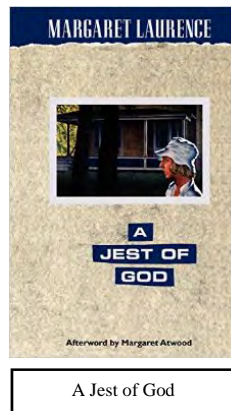
SUSAN KURBIS REMPEL has a new job as Principal of H.C. Avery Middle School, a school where she has been Vice-Principal for the last several years.

MATTHEW LAGACE has qualified as an Equity stage manager. His last show as an apprentice was *Vanya, Sonya, Masha and Spike* at the RMTC last season. This fall, he worked as the ASM on the Globe Theatre production of *Ring of Fire* in Regina, and as ASM for the Manitoba Opera Association production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.\*

MARIA LAMONT directed the opera, *Turn of the Screw*, at Wiesbaden, Germany, last season, and is directing *Carmen* for Edmonton Opera this spring.

DALE LAKEVOLD teaches Creative Writing at the University of Brandon. He's working on a stage adaptation of Margaret Laurence's novel, *A Jest of God*.

MIKE LAWRENCHUK played the title role in Shakespeare on the



A Jest of God

Saskatchewan's production of *Othello* last summer. MIKE previously played the role for Shakespeare in the Ruins in Winnipeg.

JEFF LECLERC is Secretary of the University of Manitoba. He and his wife had their second child this year.

TANNIS LEHMANN teaches English and drama at Kildonan East Collegiate.

CURTIS LOWTON teaches at St. George's school.

JOHN MACDONALD played the role of Jesse James in the first season of *The Pinkertons*.

LAURIE MACDONELL performed in *Lysistrata* and is currently in our upcoming production of *Middletown*.

JIM MACGREGOR produces programs for Shaw Community TV. JIM was the Spartan Ambassador in *Lysistrata*.

ALAN MACKENZIE performed in the Hallowe'en production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at the Park Theatre.

JEFF MADDEN directed the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre production of *Nude With Violin* for CowardFest 2015, and WMT's production of *Improbable Fiction* for AyckbournFest 2016. JEFF teaches at Sir Isaac Brock School.

LIZ MADDEN performed in the BHT Alumni production of *Lysistrata*.

GUY MADDIN's new film, *The Forbidden Room*, premiered at the Sun Dance Film Festival. Later in the year, it won the Rogers Best Canadian Film Award. GUY directed the Mariachi Ghost's most recent music video.



The Forbidden Room

SHAYLYN MAHARAJ-POLIAH has started graduate work in English at the U of M. She performed in *Lysistrata*.

SWEENEY MAIN works for Student Services at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. She got married last spring.

JOCK MARTIN teaches drama at St. John's Ravenscourt School.

SUE MATHESON teaches English at Red Deer College.

KYLE MCCULLOCH writes scripts for *South Park*.

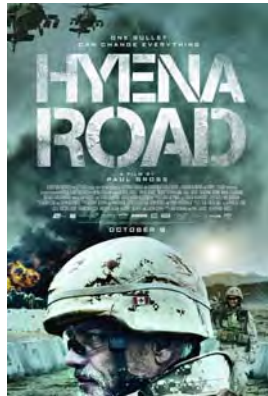
CHUCK MCEWEN is Executive Producer of the Winnipeg Fringe Festival and of RMTC's Master Playwright Festival. Last spring, he directed the annual "lawyer's show" at the Warehouse.\*

BRENDA MCLEAN performed in *The Whitechapel Redemption*, an independent production of a bouffon clown show presented in the Theatre Incarnate studio in March. Later in the season, she directed the PTE Adult Company's production of Harold Pinter's *Celebration*, and in May, she

designed the set and costumes for the Sarasvati production of *Missing Me*. Over the summer, she designed the costumes for the Shakespeare in the Ruins production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. BRENDA was Head of Wardrobe at PTE for the 2014/15 season, and is in the same position for 15/16. BRENDA coached and directed the choruses for *Lysistrata*, and later this fall co-created and performed in *Sapientia*, a theatre of objects treatment of a tenth century text by Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim; BRENDA also helped to design the show. The show was co-produced by Theatre Incarnate, Theatre Aztec, and theatre out of line and presented in Theatre Incarnate's studio on Albert St.

ROSS MCMILLAN directed the Echo Theatre production of *Blithe Spirit* for CowardFest 2015. A number of ROSS' short radio plays were performed live at the February Theatre Projects Manitoba salon at Maw's. ROSS was one of the performers, along with GORD TANNER, SARAH CONSTIBLE, KATIE BASCHAK, RYAN BJORNSON, and others. ROSS performed in the TPM production of *Proud* and the RMTc production of *The Lady in Black* last season, and read parts in JOSEPH ARAGON's *How the Heavens Go* and Per Brask's new translation of *Hedda Gabler* in the CAROL SHIELDS Festival in May.

AQQALU MEEKIS performed in the Tara Players production of Drew Hayden Taylor's *AlterNatives* last season. He's in the new Paul Gross film, *Hyena Road*, and came back to the Black Hole this fall to perform in *Lysistrata*.



Hyena Road

BRUCE MICHALSKI was one of the directors working on *Lysistrata*, and in addition served as the production's musical director.

RYAN MILLER performed in the MTC Warehouse production of Theresa Rebeck's *Seminar*.

STEPHANIE MOROZ came back to Winnipeg to play the title role in the BHT Alumni production of *Lysistrata* this fall.

CARSON NATTRASS performed in an episode of *The Pinkertons*. Last season, he performed in *Vigilante*, a new play being developed by Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton and the National Arts Centre.

MARTIN NAVARRO does stand up. This November, he performed at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York city.

FAITH NEBLETT is teaching in Korea.

JASON NEUFELD has a new job as General Manager of Young Jean Lee's Theater Company in New York City.

YVETTE NOLAN's new play, *The Unplugging*, was produced by Native Earth Performing Arts in



The Unplugging

Toronto in the spring.

THERESA OSWALD was narrowly defeated in her bid to become leader of the Manitoba NDP and premier of the province last winter.

GERALD PAULS teaches English in Winkler.

TRACY PENNER performed in the RMTc production of *Private Lives* for CowardFest 2015, and read the part of Hedda in the reading of Per Brask's new translation of *Hedda Gabler* at the CAROL SHIELDS Festival of New Work at PTE in May. Next summer, TRACY will be performing in a revival of Armin Wiebe's *The Moonlight Sonata of Beethoven Blatz* in Saskatchewan.

NICK PETUHOFF played a number of roles, including Romeo and Lady Capulet, in Shakespeare in the Ruins' production of their stripped down *Romeo and Juliet*, which SIR toured to schools throughout Manitoba and north west Ontario last fall. NICK is also working an internship at the SIR office, funded by ACI. Also last fall, he stage managed the Theatre by the River production of *Edward II*.

NANCY PITCAIRN teaches at Vincent Massey School in Brandon.

BROOKE PLUTA will be the assistant director for the Winnipeg Studio Theatre production of *Heathers* this spring, and in May, she'll be the apprentice director working on the Dry Cold production of *A Little Night Music*. BROOKE directed the BHT production of *The Bald Soprano* this season, and once again served as one of the U of M reps for Theatre Projects Manitoba.

KATHRYN PRINCE teaches in the Department of English at the University of Ottawa.

ALANA PYRCH was an assistant director for *Lysistrata*.

LYNDON RADCHENKA graduated in the spring, and came back to the Black Hole in the fall to perform in *Lysistrata*. He'll soon be starting his studies in Law.

KEVIN RAMBERRAN made his television debut in an episode of *The Pinkertons*. KEVIN recently completed his MA at the University of Manitoba and currently serves as the Teaching Assistant for the Theatre program. KEVIN performed alongside THOMAS TOLES at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival as *The 28th Minute*. KEVIN will be performing in our upcoming production of *Middletown* and is set to direct and produce *The Collector* at the 2016 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival alongside GEORGE TOLES.

JEREMY RAMPTON designed the set for *Lysistrata*.

STEVE RATZLAFF's pair of one-act plays, *Reservations*, will be produced as the third show in the Theatre Projects Manitoba 15/16 season. STEVE will also perform in the show. BILL KERR has done dramaturgical work on the plays, and IAN



Sunnyside

ROSS co-directs.

CHRIS READ performed in *Sunnyside* on CITY TV. He works for CBC Radio.

NALINI REDDY is a lawyer practicing in Winnipeg. She performed in the BHT production of *Lysistrata* this fall.

JORGE REQUENA-RAMOS' band, Mariachi Ghost, is playing at Folk Fest this summer. IAN MIKITA also plays with the group. GUY MADDIN directed the group's most recent music video.\*



A still from The Mariachi Ghost's video for *Marigold/Cempazuchitl* directed by Guy Maddin.

KERRIE REID teaches for the international school in Macau.

CHRISTINE REINFORT graduated from the Studio 58 professional acting program at Langara College in Vancouver this spring.

TRACY RETTIG-SEWELL has given birth to her second child. She's on mat leave from her job teaching drama at Dakota Collegiate.

SYLVIA RICHARDSON performed in the old women's chorus in *Lysistrata*.

IAN ROSS taught playwriting and a section of Intro for the Theatre Program in the 2014/15 school year. He's at the U of M again this year as playwright-in-residence, working on his new play, *Doubtful House*, which the Theatre Program commissioned to open the new theatre. BILL KERR is dramaturging, and CHRIS JOHNSON will direct. Also this season, IAN is co-directing STEVE RATZLAFF's new play, *Reservations*, for TPM.

GARRETT RUSNAK was the technical director for *Lysistrata*. GARRETT is back working for the Theatre Program as a technician this fall, helping the Program and the Black Hole company make the move into the new Theatre. He has also been working on the production staff at PTE: he was the carpenter and worked on the lighting crew for their production of *Butcher*.\*

KAREN SCHELLENBERG is the Production Manager in the Theatre Program at the U of M. She's been very busy setting up the move into the new theatre over the summer and this fall.\*

JOFF SCHMIDT produces *Definitely Not the Opera* and

reviews plays for CBC radio.\*

RYAN SEGAL is working towards his Master's degree in City Planning at the University of Manitoba.

GIORGIA SEVERINI has founded a new theatre collective, Ginger and Rosemary Theatre, in Edmonton. It plans to mount its first production in April, *Three on a Seesaw* by Luigi Bonari, in a translation by GIORGIA and a collaborator. GIORGIA flew all the way from Edmonton to see our production of *Lysistrata* in the fall.

KHAL SHARIFF is the CEO of his own software company, Project Whitecard. He came back to the Black Hole this fall to perform in *Lysistrata*.

JULIE SIMPSON teaches drama and dance at Gordon Bell high school in Winnipeg. Last school year, she directed their production of *Macbeth*. Once again, JULIE stage managed the MAP high school playwriting competition at the Warehouse in the spring. JULIE chaired the steering committee that organized the alumni production of *Lysistrata: The Musical* in the Black Hole this fall. JULIE appears in our upcoming production of *Middletown*.

LORI SLOBODIAN was the production manager for *Lysistrata*.

AMANDA SMART was production manager at Rainbow Stage for the summer of 2015.

DANA SMITH performs with the H.U.N.K.S. sketch comedy company. The group will be going to Vancouver in January for the Vancouver Sketch Comedy Festival. DANA has organized an open mic night for women standup comedians, and she played Myrhinne in *Lysistrata*.\*

CHRISTOPHER SOBCZAK supplied technical support for the Snakeskin Jacket/Bravura Theatre co-production of *Hamlet*. He performed in the Theatre Incarnate/Theatre Aztec/theatre out of line production of *Sapientia*.

CLAIRE SPARLING worked as a costume builder on the SIR production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. She is the head costumer for Festival du Voyageur

JASON SPARLING teaches at Lorette Collegiate.

LESLIE STARK teaches high school in Vancouver.

LOGAN STEFANSON's *You Were There: A Shadowplay* (Logan's version of Noel Coward's *You Were There: A Musical Fantasia*) was presented by Pocket Frock Productions for CowardFest 2015. LOGAN is working as an intern with



You Were There: A Musical Fantasia

## What's Happening Alumni

We would love to know what you are up to, and include an update of the successes of our Black Hole Alumni in future editions of our newsletter. Get in touch with the Theatre and tell us all about how amazing you are!

the Manitoba Association of Playwrights this year.

TERI STEVENS hosts a radio program, “Venus Envy”, on UMF.M.

KELLY STIFORA teaches Communications at Red River College. He worked as publicist on the BHT Alumni production of *Lysistrata*.\*

JOHN STINSON has a new job as CEO of the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Commission.

RAY STRACHAN performed in the RMTTC production of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* this fall. He has a continuing role in the TV series, *The Pinkertons*. RAY directed the Echo Theatre production of *A Strange Pair* for AyckbournFest, and also participated in the directors’ panel.\*

JEFF STROME performed in the reading of Daniel Thau-Eleff’s new play, *Deserter*, in this year’s CAROL SHIELDS Festival of New Work.

MARINA TAGGART runs a children’s theatre in California.

JIM TAYLOR has joined the teaching staff at the Chicago Second City Training Center.

SUSANNE THOMAS teaches English in a university in Bangkok.

THERESA THOMSON has a new job as the Assistant Director of the Manitoba Theatre for Young People School.

ERIN THORLEIFSON helped with the costumes for *Lysistrata*.

JOCELYN THORVALDSON-DUNSTAN played the leader of the old women’s chorus in *Lysistrata*.

PAUL THULNER teaches at Stanley Knowles.

JOHN TITLEY wrote the script for the TV show, *Escape or Die*, which was broadcast last spring.

THOMAS TOLES published his close analysis of the end of *Make Tomorrow* in the spring issue of *Film International*.

THOMAS has just completed his second Master’s at Oxford, where he studied on a Rhodes Scholarship. This academic year, he’s teaching a couple of courses at the U of W, and is leading a series of improv workshops for the U of M Theatre Program. THOMAS also started a new position as Theatre School Drama Outreach Co-ordinator at MTYP. THOMAS will be performing in *Middletown*.\*

DAMION TRYON teaches English at Kildonan East Collegiate.

ANNIE TUMA co-created and performed in *You Know I Know*

at the Toronto Fringe.

STEVE RATZLAFF performed in the Echo Theatre production of *Blithe Spirit* for CowardFest 2015. A pair of new short plays he has written will be produced by Theatre Projects Manitoba under the collective title, *Reservations*, later this season.

SARAH CONSTIBLE is in the cast, IAN ROSS co-directs, and BILL KERR dramaturged.

JANE WALKER performed in *Lysistrata*.

WAYNE WATSON teaches drama and English for the Kumon Leysin school in Switzerland.

TIM WEBSTER performed in the Tara Players production of Drew Hayden Taylor’s *AlterNatives* last spring. TIM was in the old men’s chorus in the BHT Alumni production of *Lysistrata*, and early this year, performed in the Tara Players production of *How the Other Half Loves* for AyckbournFest 2016. \*

STEFANIE WIENS performed in the Echo Theatre production of *Blithe Spirit* for CowardFest 2015, and in the Echo Theatre production of *A Strange Pair* for AyckbournFest 2016.

DAVID WILLIAMSON is Dean of Arts at the University College of the North.

KIM ZEGLINSKI took her one-woman show, *Mittelschmerz*, which she performed at the Winnipeg Fringe in the summer of 2014, on the road in the summer of 2015: she performed her piece at the Gimli Summer Theatre, the Regina Fringe, and the Edmonton Fringe before bringing it back to Winnipeg to perform it at Sarasvati’s FemFest this fall. KIM’s son, AIDAN, performed in the MTYP production of *This Is Where We Came In* for AyckbournFest 2016. She also hosted a TED talk.

\* denotes participation in the Winnipeg Fringe!



Escape or Die

This edition of the Black Hole Theatre Co. Newsletter was compiled by Kevin Ramberran with Alumni & Fringe News provided by Chris Johnson.

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Visit us on the web at: BHTC.ca

## Fringe 2015

*How to Talk to Human Beings*: Written & Directed by FRANCES KONCAN.

*Disco Pigs*: Directed by Professor BILL KERR Featuring: DAN GRANT & MEGAN ANDRES

*From Broadway to Obscurity*: Stage managed by BROOKE PLUTA

*Tape*: produced by The 28th Minute, Directed by IVAN HENWOOD, Featuring KEVIN RAMBERRAN, JUSTIN FRY, NATASHIA DURAND, Stage Managed by WINSON TA

*Central Park West*: Directed by MARGARET FERGUSSON, Featuring MARK FINNBOGASON, TASHA ROTH, SARAH PUTNAM, DANIEL TOMPKINS, SYDNEY WIEBE, Stage Managed by KAT PETRASH

*Who Killed the Applebottoms*: featured LINDSAY BODNAR

*H.U.N.K.S.* : TIM GREY and DANA SMITH are part of this ensemble.

*Eurydice*: Directed by JEFF HOMER, Stage managed by KALEIGH OSADICK, Designs by LAUREN GOWLER, FEATURING LAURIE MACDONELL, NICHOLAS GROULX, IAN BASTIN, LOGAN STEFANSON, KAI CHOCHINOV, & KERENSA PETERS

*A Behanding in Spokane*: Directed by KELLY RAE JENKEN Featuring PAUL DUNCAN, BILL KERR, RAY STRACHAN, & CLAIRE THERESE.

*Circle Mirror Transformation*: Directed by GEORGE TOLES, Featuring DANIEL CHEN, HEATHER ROBERTS, & CAITLIN BELTON, Stage Managed by ERIN THORLEIFSON & LAURIE

MACDONELL

*A Beautiful View* produced by Snakeskin Jacket, Directed by JANE WALKER, Featuring KERRI WOLOSZYN Original Music by THE MARIACHI GHOST

*Die! Shakespeare! Die!* written by and featuring LEIGH-ANNE KEHLER

*Turned!* featured LUKE CECELON

*Parking Lots Paved Paradise* also featured LUKE CECELON

*The Mystery of Krummhorn Castle*: Book, Music, Lyrics & Musical Direction by JOSEPH ARAGON

*Just Ed.* featured LEITH CLARK

*Pulling Pints* was directed by LEITH CLARK

SARAH JANE MARTIN was in *Biggest Little Child Star*

*Cinderella, or the Story of Bigfoot*: directed by JUSTIN DANYLUK and featured TONY PORTEOUS and KEVIN DEL ROSARIO

*Safe and Sound*: featured BRENNAN HAKES, ROWAN GANNON, and KAS KUROPATWA

*The Birdcage* was stage managed by MATTHEW LAGACE

THOMAS TOLES & KEVIN RAMBERRAN performed on the outdoor stage as The 28th Minute

MICHELLE PALANSKY, BRAD SAWATZKY, JOFF SCHMIDT, KELLY STIFORA wrote for the CBC review crew

Fringe Staff include many alumni: CHUCK MCEWAN (Festival Producer), GARRETT RUSNAK, AINZA BEILLEFUILLE, KAREN SCHELLENBERG (venue techs), RAY STRACHAN (site supervisor), TIM WEBSTER (Kids Fringe)

## Dr. Bill Kerr's Farewell to Dr. Chris Johnson

I am very pleased to express admiration and gratitude to Professor Chris Johnson for his extraordinary service.

Our new Theatre is the realization of years of, no decades of, effort by Chris that has finally come to fruition. I quote here from a conclusion to a report Chris submitted to the then English Department to argue for upgrading the makeshift Black Hole Theatre and shops and hiring a full time technical person: "There are limits to what can be done with the Black Hole, but what we can do we should do, even if only as an interim measure" That report was made in 1980 and improvements were implemented by the department at that time, allowing for that 35 year interim measure.

Chris has had to use all his powers of imagination and industry to make the program exist, or rather I should say to thrive, to produce hundreds of productions (of which Chris has been personally involved in over a hundred). He has always kept his focus on serving and teaching generations of students while also serving as coordinator, fighting for theatre for over a quarter of a century all while somehow finding the time to become the country's foremost scholar on the work of George F Walker. Chris has not made do, he has made better.

I have been canvassing different constituencies for their thoughts on Chris and this effort and accomplishments have been a constant theme. I asked our longtime admin assistant Marilyn Loat and she, aside from steering me to the report I quoted above, reminded me that whenever there is a threat of rain or melting, Chris covers all the work surfaces in his office with plastic because of the many leaks. I will not say that he does this happily, but he does as he has always done -- what is necessary so that work may continue.

She also told me the story of student volunteers not showing up for assigned duties to productions which led to one show with Chris ushering and Dennis doing box office. Whatever was needed. A more formal structure was put in place afterwards to cover this eventuality but I recall a couple of years ago Chris volunteering once again to usher (in order to lead/shame his students into taking the jobs. It didn't work.) And there was Chris not learning from experience, handing me a program, once again doing what was necessary to make the show work, to make the company work, to make the program work.

Chris has inspired this level of work from colleagues as well. George Toles told me about the two times he was directed by Chris in Moliere's the Miser and Euripides The Bacchae and how well they collaborated even if (or perhaps because) students at the time sometimes described George as Chekhov and Chris as Brecht. George noted that Chris is technically very different in working with actors than George was and is: with Chris offering smiling encouragement and spare comments. George felt he had to do anything to make his work as an actor better in order to increase that smile and indeed if possible to elicit a burst of laughter from Chris -- this was apparently easier in the Miser than the Bacchae.

All of us in the theatre program know what an excellent collaborator Chris is whether we have worked in that director/actor relationship or as director/playwright/dramaturge or as a co-director. We are also very much in his debt as we are the fortunate recipients of the many struggles he had to make do and make better, even having to fight for such things as being able to claim theatre tickets as legitimate research expenses.

Personally, I want to thank Chris for being a mentor, a leader, a cocreator and a friend who has, like Moses, brought us through the wilderness to the River Jordan. Fortunately, he will get to cross over and direct for us for our March show and beyond (we're not letting him leave that easily).

Former student Nathan Dueck posted recently what Chris told him to do with the empty nostalgic feeling after closing a production. Chris told him, "to take a deep breath and start preparing for your next show." I will close then, fittingly I think, with Chris's own words about what to do now. "Take a deep breath and start preparing for your next show." -- it opens in March!